

House Bill 443

March 24, 2009

Presented by Chris Smith

Senate Fish and Wildlife Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Chris Smith, Deputy Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

HB 443 simply makes clear what species of fish and wildlife are defined as nongame for management purposes - and those are simply any wild animal not already defined as a game animal, migratory bird, upland game bird, game fish, furbearer, or predatory animal. FWP believes this is a marked improvement over the existing statutory language, as it negates the need to search all other statutes or regulations for potential conflicting definitions of a particular species, while at the same time maintains the authority of private landowners counties and the Department of Agriculture to manage rodents and vertebrate pests. This bill also clarifies the definition of management to make it a more contemporary definition that recognizes conservation of wildlife populations consistent with other uses of land and habitat where those populations occur, versus the current language that implies management should result in increasing numbers of wildlife up to the optimum carrying capacity.

FWP supports these changes as they clarify and update statute, without impacting any private landowner or user group. Therefore, FWP stands in full support of House Bill 443.